

APPENDIX O

Public Outreach

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Appendix O - Public Outreach

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The Surface Transportation Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) and cooperating Federal agencies (U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and U.S. Coast Guard) currently are preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad's proposed expansion of its rail line into the Powder River Basin. DM&E's proposal spans three states (MN, SD, and WY) and would involve constructing over 280 miles of new rail line and rebuilding 600 miles of existing rail line. The Draft EIS will identify a reasonable range of alternative actions, including the no-build alternative, analyze the potential environmental impacts of project-related activities, and recommend appropriate mitigation measures. The potential areas of impact include:

safety, noise, air quality, environmental justice, Native American concerns, cultural and historic resources, biological resources, hazardous materials, socioeconomics, water resources, energy resources, transportation systems, cumulative effects, recreation, land use, geology & soils, and aesthetics.

Because of the size and scope of the project, the Draft EIS will be quite large -- over 2,000 pages and several volumes. To reduce the amount of paper needed and limit waste, we will make the Draft EIS available for public review at a number of accessible locations within the project area. In addition, the document will be available on the Surface Transportation Board's web site (<http://www.stb.dot.gov>). For those who would like the entire document but have limited storage space, the Draft EIS will also be available on CD-ROM.

To receive the Draft EIS in the form desired, you **must** return the attached postcard, following the instructions below, by **July 3, 2000**.

- Remove the address label from the front of the postcard and place it in the address verification area. If name and/or address on the address label are incorrect, please **clearly and legibly** print your name and address in the address verification area of the postcard.
- Review the options and indicate your preferences by placing an **X** in the appropriate box on the reverse side of this form.

Please note: Your name will be removed from the DM&E project mailing list if this postcard is not returned.

If you have further questions, please call the Surface Transportation Board's toll-free environmental hotline at 1-877-404-3044.

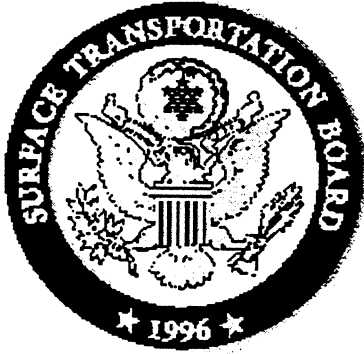
We are updating our mailing list for this project. Please check only one choice below:

- ☐ Yes, I want to stay on the mailing list. I want to receive ONLY the Executive Summary of the Draft EIS.
- ☐ Yes, I want to stay on the mailing list. I want to receive the Draft EIS (hard copy).
- ☐ Yes, I want to stay on the mailing list. I want to receive the Draft EIS (CD-ROM).
- ☐ Yes, I want to stay on the mailing list. But, I DO NOT want a copy of the Draft EIS, or the Executive Summary.

We will remove your name from the DM&E project mailing list if we do not receive this postcard from you.

Print name and address or affix address label here: _____

***Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001***



News

FOR RELEASE
06/02/2000 (Friday)
No. 00-26

Contact: Dennis Watson
(202) 565-1596
TDD/TDY 1-(800) 877-8339
www.stb.dot.gov

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD INITIATES BROAD POSTCARD MAILING TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE DISTRIBUTION OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT IN PROPOSED DAKOTA, MINNESOTA & EASTERN RAIL LINE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION CASE

Surface Transportation Board (Board) Chairman Linda J. Morgan announced today that the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) is mailing postcards to all parties of record and everyone currently on the Board's environmental distribution list for the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad's (DM&E's) proposed rail line construction into Wyoming's Powder River Basin--approximately 5000 parties. The postcards will provide a more streamlined and efficient process for making the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) available to interested parties and the general public.

The postcards will allow SEA to verify and update names and mailing addresses. In addition, the postcards will inform the public that the Draft EIS will be available on the Board's website, at www.stb.dot.gov, and at certain public locations within the project area, such as libraries. Finally, the postcards will provide those interested in receiving the actual document with a choice of formats, including CD-ROM.

SEA estimates that, because of the size and scope of the proposal, the Draft EIS will be quite large--approximately 2000 pages and several volumes. To reduce the amount of

paper needed, limit waste, and wisely use scarce natural resources, SEA encourages recipients of the postcards to review the Draft EIS via the Board's web site, CD-ROM, and at publicly available locations whenever possible. Those who wish the CD-ROM version or hard copies of all or part of the Draft EIS will be asked to return the postcards by July 3, 2000.

SEA, together with its cooperating agencies, anticipates issuing the Draft EIS later this summer. The Draft EIS will address a wide range of environmental issues, including alternatives, and contain recommended environmental mitigation measures, as appropriate.

Prior to issuing the Draft EIS, SEA will publish notice of the document's availability in the Federal Register and local newspapers. SEA will provide at least 45 days for public review and comment. At the close of the public comment period, SEA, together with its cooperating agencies, will prepare a Final EIS responding to the comments received on the Draft EIS. In reaching their respective decisions in this case, the Board and cooperating agencies will take into account the full environmental record, including the Draft EIS, the Final EIS, and all public and agency comments received.

The Powder River Basin Project is DM&E's proposal to construct approximately 280 miles of new rail line and upgrade approximately 600 miles of existing rail line in Minnesota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. The project would allow DM&E to extend its existing system westward to access coal mines in Wyoming's Powder River Basin. This proceeding is docketed at the Board as *Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation Construction into the Powder River Basin*, STB Finance Docket No. 33407.

Additional information regarding this proceeding may be obtained by telephoning SEA's toll-free Environmental Hotline at **1-877-404-3044**, or by viewing and downloading Board decisions in Finance Docket No. 33407 via the "Decisions and Notices" link on the Board's Website at **www.stb.dot.gov**.

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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Section of Environmental Analysis

June 5, 2000

To: Director of Public Service Announcements

From: Victoria Rutson, Project Manager

RE: Finance Docket 33407 - Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad - Construction into the Powder River Basin - Public Service Announcement

Attached is a public service announcement regarding a proposed railroad construction project that may affect your community.

On February 20, 1998, the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad filed an application with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) to construct and operate new rail line facilities in east-central Wyoming, southwest South Dakota, and south-central Minnesota. The Board is currently reviewing the railroad's application and would like to inform your local community of the proposed rail line construction and operation and provide instruction on how to obtain further information. We are asking your station to please air the attached public service announcement as many times as possible between June 6 and June 9, 2000.

Should you have any questions or comments, please contact Victoria Rutson, SEA's Project Leader for the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad's Proposed Construction into the Powder River Basin, by calling the Board's toll-free environmental hotline at 1-877-404-3044.

Thank you for your assistance.

**Surface Transportation Board
Section of Environmental Analysis**

**Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad's Proposed Construction into the
Powder River Basin**

**PSA Radio Spot
:30**

On June 2, 2000, the Surface Transportation Board mailed 5,000 postcards to people on the Board's distribution list for the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad's proposed rail line construction into Wyoming's Powder River Basin. These postcards will allow the Board to update its mailing list and give interested people the opportunity to receive a copy of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Postcards must be returned by July 3, 2000.

If you have questions, please call the Board's toll-free environmental hotline at 1-877-404-3044

31346
SEA

SERVICE DATE - SEPTEMBER 27, 2000

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

STB Finance Docket No. 33407

DAKOTA, MINNESOTA & EASTERN RAILROAD CORPORATION
CONSTRUCTION INTO THE POWDER RIVER BASIN

Decided September 22, 2000

ACTION: Notice of availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement and notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation (DM&E) has filed an application with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) for authority to construct and operate new rail line facilities in east-central Wyoming, southwest South Dakota, and south-central Minnesota. The project, known as the Powder River Basin Expansion Project, involves approximately 280.9 miles of new rail line construction and would extend DM&E's existing rail line from Wall, South Dakota west to coal mines in Wyoming's Powder River Basin. Additionally, DM&E proposes to rebuild approximately 597.8 miles of existing rail line along its current system to standards acceptable for operation of unit coal trains. The project would require actions by a number of Federal agencies, including the Board, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS), the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), and the U.S. Coast Guard (Coast Guard).

The Board, through its Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) and in cooperation with USFS, BLM, COE, Reclamation, and the Coast Guard, has published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the Powder River Basin Expansion Project. This Draft EIS is a preliminary analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the DM&E proposal and its reasonable and feasible alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative. SEA emphasizes that the conclusions and recommended environmental mitigation measures in this Draft EIS are preliminary, and invites public and agency comments on all aspects of the Draft EIS. SEA is providing a 90-day public comment period on the Draft EIS. Comments must be postmarked by the close of the comment period, which is January 5, 2001. Information on how to submit comments is set forth below.

SEA, working with the five cooperating agencies, will make its final recommendations on the project, including environmentally preferable alternative(s) and environmental mitigation, to the Board in the Final EIS, after considering all public comments on the Draft EIS and conducting further environmental analysis, agency consultations, and site visits, as appropriate.

The Final EIS will be issued after public comments have been received, reviewed, and fully

evaluated. Notice of availability of the Final EIS will be published in the Federal Register.

Following issuance of the Final EIS, the Board will make its final decision regarding this project and any environmental conditions it might impose. When considering whether to grant final approval of the proposed transaction, the Board will consider the potential environmental effects and the cost of any environmental mitigation it might impose on the project. In reaching its final decision in this proceeding, the Board will take into account the full environmental record, including the Draft EIS, the Final EIS, and all public and agency comments received. The cooperating agencies will issue their decisions based on the same environmental record.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Victoria Rutson, Project Manager, Surface Transportation Board, Powder River Basin Expansion Project, 1-877-404-3044; U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service: Wendy Schmitzer, (307) 358-4690; U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management: Bill Carson, (307) 746-4453; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Jerry Folkers, (402) 221-4173 (Omaha District) and Timothy Fell, (651) 290-5360 (St. Paul District); U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation: Kenneth Parr, (605) 394-9757; U. S. Coast Guard: Bruce McLaren, (314) 539-33724. [TDD/TDY for hearing impaired: 1-800-877-8339.]

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Public Availability: In addition to mailing the document to over 2,500 interested parties, SEA has distributed the Draft EIS to over 80 public libraries in the project area and asked that the entire Draft EIS be made publicly available in their reference section. To obtain the name of the library nearest you that has received the Draft EIS, please call the toll-free Environmental Hotline at 1-877-404-3044 and leave your name, address, and telephone number. The entire Draft EIS is also available on the Board's website (<http://www.stb.dot.gov>) by clicking on the "Decisions" button and searching by Service date (September 27, 2000) or Docket Number (FD 33407). The Draft EIS will be listed as Environmental Document under the "TYPE" category. Because of the size of the document — over 2000 pages and several volumes — distribution of the entire Draft EIS has been limited to key governmental agencies, parties of record, and those who requested the entire document in response to SEA's postcard mailing in June 2000.

Public Comment: Written comments on the Draft EIS must be submitted by **January 5, 2001**. For comments over five pages long, please send an original and ten copies. For comments five pages long and less, an original alone may be submitted. Please send all comments to the following address:

Office of the Secretary
Case Control Unit
STB Finance Docket No. 33407
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K. Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

In the lower left-hand corner of the envelope, please include the following:

Attention: Victoria Rutson
Environmental Project Manager
Environment Filing

SEA is also requesting comments on other documents set forth in Appendices to the Draft EIS, specifically, the Biological Assessment, the Programmatic Agreement and Identification Plan, and the Memorandum of Agreement. Comments on these documents are also due by January 5, 2001 and should be submitted to the Board according to the instructions above.

Regarding the Forest Plan Amendments, which are also set forth in the Executive Summary and in Appendix L to the Draft EIS, the National Forest Management Act, 36 CFR 219.10(e), requires consistency between projects being proposed and National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans). Accordingly, USFS evaluated two existing Forest Plans (Nebraska and Medicine Bow Forest Plans) for consistency with standards and guidelines of those plans as well as the Draft National Grasslands Plan Revision (Preferred Alternative 3). Based on the identification of its Preferred Alternative, Alternative C, USFS has determined that if Alternative C is selected for implementation, then Alternative C will not be consistent with any of the Forest Plans above, and plan amendments must be proposed. You are invited to comment on these proposed Forest Plan Amendments and may send written comments to Ms. Wendy Schmitzer, USFS Project Coordinator, Douglas Ranger District, 2250 East Richards Street, Douglas, Wyoming, 82633, or call (307) 358-1634. You may email comments on the Forest Plan Amendments to: wschmitzer@fs.fed.us.

SEA anticipates that DM&E will submit two permit applications under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to the COE by the publication date of this Notice. Comments on DM&E's Section 404 Permit Application relating to Minnesota should be sent to: Mr. Timothy Fell, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, 190 5th Street East, St. Paul, MN 55101-1638. Comments on DM&E's Section 404 Permit Application relating to Wyoming and South Dakota should be sent to: Mr. Jerry Folkers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, 215 North 17th Street, Omaha, NE 68102-4978. The COE has made the Applications available for review at various locations. For the location nearest you that has the Section 404 Application relating to Minnesota, please contact Mr. Fell at (651) 290-5360. For the location nearest you that has the Section 404 Application relating to South Dakota and Wyoming, please contact Mr. Folkers at (402) 221-4173.

Public Meetings: In addition to receiving written comments on the Draft EIS, SEA will host 12 public meetings at the locations and on the dates and times listed below. At each meeting, SEA and the participating cooperating agencies will give a brief presentation. Then members of the public will have the opportunity to speak. All public meetings will follow the same format and agenda. SEA will have a transcriber available at each meeting to ensure that oral comments are accurately recorded. In some locations, two meetings will be held (an afternoon and an evening

session). Both the afternoon and evening meetings will follow the same format and agenda; it is not necessary to attend both meetings.

Douglas, WY

Best Western Douglas Inn
1450 Riverbend Drive
Douglas, WY 82633
Monday, October 30, 2000
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Newcastle, WY

The Fountain Inn
2 Fountain Plaza
Newcastle, WY 82701
Wednesday, November 1, 2000
1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Rapid City, SD

Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
444 Mount Rushmore Road North
Rapid City, SD 57701
Thursday, November 2, 2000
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Pierre, SD

Best Western Kings Inn
200 South Pierre
Pierre, SD 57501
Monday, November 13, 2000
1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Brookings, SD

Brookings Inn
2500 East 5th Street
Brookings, SD 57006
Tuesday, November 14, 2000
1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Mankato, MN

Best Western Hotel and Restaurant
1111 Range Street

North Mankato, MN 56003
Wednesday, November 15, 2000
1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Rochester, MN
Mayo Civic Center
30 Civic Center Drive South East
Rochester, MN 55904
Thursday, November 16, 2000
1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

SEA will also conduct a meeting specifically for interested Tribes and Tribal organizations, as part of the formal government-to-government consultation process on the Draft EIS.

Pre-Registration for Public Meetings: Persons wanting to speak at a public meeting are strongly urged to pre-register by calling the toll-free Environmental Hotline for this project at 1-877- 404-3044 and leave their name, telephone number, the name of any group, business, or agency affiliation, if applicable, and the date and time of the meeting at which they wish to speak. The deadline for pre-registration for all meetings is **October 20, 2000**.

Persons will be called to speak at each meeting in the order in which they pre-registered. Those wishing to speak but that did not pre-register will be accommodated at each meeting as time allows. Those wishing to speak at more than one meeting will also be accommodated as time allows and after all others have had an opportunity to participate. As SEA would like as many persons as possible to participate and given that there will be a limited amount of time at each meeting, all speakers are strongly encouraged to prepare summary oral comments, and submit detailed comments in writing. SEA also encourages groups of individuals with similar comments to designate a representative to speak for them.

By the Board, Elaine K. Kaiser, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

FR-4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

[STB Finance Docket No. 33407]

Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation Construction into the Powder River Basin.

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Notice of availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement and notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation (DM&E) has filed an application with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) for authority to construct and operate new rail line facilities in east-central Wyoming, southwest South Dakota, and south-central Minnesota. The project, known as the Powder River Basin Expansion Project, involves approximately 280.9 miles of new rail line construction and would extend DM&E's existing rail line from Wall, South Dakota west to coal mines in Wyoming's Powder River Basin. Additionally, DM&E proposes to rebuild approximately 597.8 miles of existing rail line along its current system to standards acceptable for operation of unit coal trains. The project would require actions by a number of Federal agencies, including the Board, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS), the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), and the U.S. Coast Guard (Coast Guard).

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6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Newcastle, WY

The Fountain Inn
2 Fountain Plaza
Newcastle, WY 82701
Wednesday, November 1, 2000
1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Rapid City, SD

Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
444 Mount Rushmore Road North
Rapid City, SD 57701
Thursday, November 2, 2000
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Pierre, SD

Best Western Kings Inn
200 South Pierre
Pierre, SD 57501
Monday, November 13, 2000
1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Brookings, SD

Brookings Inn
2500 East 5th Street
Brookings, SD 57006
Tuesday, November 14, 2000
1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Mankato, MN

Best Western Hotel and Restaurant
1111 Range Street
North Mankato, MN 56003
Wednesday, November 15, 2000
1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and
6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Rochester, MN

Mayo Civic Center
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Rochester, MN 55904
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By the Board, Elaine K. Kaiser, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams

Secretary



[\[EPA Home\]](#) [\[Federal Register Home\]](#) [\[Comments\]](#) [\[Search Federal Register\]](#) [\[Search EPA\]](#)]

Federal Register Document

[Federal Register: September 27, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 188)]
[Notices]
[Page 58146-58148]
From the Federal Register Online via GPO Access [wais.access.gpo.gov]
[DOCID:fr27se00-149]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33407]

Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation Construction
Into the Powder River Basin

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Notice of availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement
and notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation (DM&E) has filed an application with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) for authority to construct and operate new rail line facilities in east-central Wyoming, southwest South Dakota, and south-central Minnesota. The project, known as the Powder River Basin Expansion Project, involves approximately 280.9 miles of new rail line construction and would extend DM&E's existing rail line from Wall, South Dakota west to coal mines in Wyoming's Powder River Basin. Additionally, DM&E proposes to rebuild approximately 597.8 miles of existing rail line along its current system to standards acceptable for operation of unit coal trains. The project would require actions by a number of Federal agencies, including the Board, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS), the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation

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(Reclamation), and the U.S. Coast Guard (Coast Guard).

The Board, through its Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) and in cooperation with USFS, BLM, COE, Reclamation, and the Coast Guard, has published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the Powder River Basin Expansion Project. This Draft EIS is a preliminary analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the DM&E proposal and its reasonable and feasible alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative. SEA emphasizes that the conclusions and

recommended environmental mitigation measures in this Draft EIS are preliminary, and invites public and agency comments on all aspects of the Draft EIS. SEA is providing a 90-day public comment period on the Draft EIS. Comments must be postmarked by the close of the comment period, which is January 5, 2001. Information on how to submit comments is set forth below.

SEA, working with the five cooperating agencies, will make its final recommendations on the project, including environmentally preferable alternative(s) and environmental mitigation, to the Board in the Final EIS, after considering all public comments on the Draft EIS and conducting further environmental analysis, agency consultations, and site visits, as appropriate. The Final EIS will be issued after public comments have been received, reviewed, and fully evaluated. Notice of availability of the Final EIS will be published in the Federal Register.

Following issuance of the Final EIS, the Board will make its final decision regarding this project and any environmental conditions it might impose. When considering whether to grant final approval of the proposed transaction, the Board will consider the potential environmental effects and the cost of any environmental mitigation it might impose on the project. In reaching its final decision in this proceeding, the Board will take into account the full environmental record, including the Draft EIS, the Final EIS, and all public and agency comments received. The cooperating agencies will issue their decisions based on the same environmental record.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Victoria Rutson, Project Manager, Surface Transportation Board, Powder River Basin Expansion Project, 1-877-404-3044; U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service: Wendy Schmitzer, (307) 358-4690; U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management: Bill Carson, (307) 746-4453; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Jerry Folkers, (402) 221-4173 (Omaha District) and Timothy Fell, (651) 290-5360 (St. Paul District); U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation: Kenneth Parr, (605) 394-9757; U.S. Coast Guard: Bruce McLaren, (314) 539-33724. [TDD/TDY for hearing impaired: 1-800-877-8339.]

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Public Availability

In addition to mailing the document to over 2,500 interested parties, SEA has distributed the Draft EIS to over 80 public libraries in the project area and asked that the entire Draft EIS be made publicly available in their reference section. To obtain the name of the library nearest you that has received the Draft EIS, please call the toll-free Environmental Hotline at 1-877-404-3044 and leave your name, address, and telephone number. The entire Draft EIS is also available on the Board's website (<http://www.stb.dot.gov>) by clicking on the "Decisions" button and searching by Service date (September 27, 2000) or Docket Number (FD 33407). The Draft EIS will be listed as Environmental Document under the "TYPE" category. Because of the size of the document--over 2000 pages and several volumes--distribution of the entire Draft EIS has been limited to key governmental agencies, parties of record, and those who requested the entire document in response to SEA's postcard mailing in June 2000.

Public Comment

Written comments on the Draft EIS must be submitted by January 5, 2001. For comments over five pages long, please send an original and ten copies. For comments five pages long and less, an original alone may be submitted. Please send all comments to the following address: Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, STB Finance Docket No.

33407, Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20423-0001.

In the lower left-hand corner of the envelope, please include the following: Attention: Victoria Rutson, Environmental Project Manager, Environment Filing.

SEA is also requesting comments on other documents set forth in Appendices to the Draft EIS, specifically, the Biological Assessment, the Programmatic Agreement and Identification Plan, and the Memorandum of Agreement. Comments on these documents are also due by January 5, 2001 and should be submitted to the Board according to the instructions above.

Regarding the Forest Plan Amendments, which are also set forth in the Executive Summary and in Appendix L to the Draft EIS, the National Forest Management Act, 36 CFR 219.10(e), requires consistency between projects being proposed and National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans). Accordingly, USFS evaluated two existing Forest Plans (Nebraska and Medicine Bow Forest Plans) for consistency with standards and guidelines of those plans as well as the Draft National Grasslands Plan Revision (Preferred Alternative 3). Based on the identification of its Preferred Alternative, Alternative C, USFS has determined that if Alternative C is selected for implementation, then Alternative C will not be consistent with any of the Forest Plans above, and plan amendments must be proposed. You are invited to comment on these proposed Forest Plan Amendments and may send written comments to Ms. Wendy Schmitzer, USFS Project Coordinator, Douglas Ranger District, 2250 East Richards Street, Douglas, Wyoming, 82633, or call (307) 358-1634. You may e-mail comments on the Forest Plan Amendments to: wschmitzer@fs.fed.us.

SEA anticipates that DM&E will submit two permit applications under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to the COE by the publication date of this Notice. Comments on DM&E's Section 404 Permit Application relating to Minnesota should be sent to: Mr. Timothy Fell, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, 190 5th Street East, St. Paul, MN 55101-1638. Comments on DM&E's Section 404 Permit Application relating to Wyoming and South Dakota should be sent to: Mr. Jerry Folkers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, 215 North 17th Street, Omaha, NE 68102-4978. The COE has made the Applications available for review at various locations. For the location nearest you that has the Section 404 Application relating to Minnesota, please contact Mr. Fell at (651) 290-5360. For the location nearest you that has the Section 404 Application relating to South Dakota and Wyoming, please contact Mr. Folkers at (402) 221-4173.

Public Meetings

In addition to receiving written comments on the Draft EIS, SEA will host 12 public meetings at the locations and on the dates and times listed below. At each meeting, SEA and the participating cooperating agencies will give a brief presentation. Then members of the public will have the opportunity to speak. All public meetings will

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follow the same format and agenda. SEA will have a transcriber available at each meeting to ensure that oral comments are accurately recorded. In some locations, two meetings will be held (an afternoon and an evening session). Both the afternoon and evening meetings will follow the same format and agenda; it is not necessary to attend both meetings.

Douglas, WY

Best Western Douglas Inn, 1450 Riverbend Drive, Douglas, WY 82633,
Monday, October 30, 2000, 6-10 p.m.
Newcastle, WY

The Fountain Inn, 2 Fountain Plaza, Newcastle, WY 82701, Wednesday, November 1, 2000, 1-4 p.m. and 6-10 p.m.
Rapid City, SD

Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, 444 Mount Rushmore Road North, Rapid City, SD 57701, Thursday, November 2, 2000, 6-10 p.m.
Pierre, SD

Best Western Kings Inn, 200 South Pierre, Pierre, SD 57501, Monday, November 13, 2000, 1-4 p.m. and 6-10 p.m.
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Mankato, MN

Best Western Hotel and Restaurant, 1111 Range Street, North Mankato, MN 56003, Wednesday, November 15, 2000, 1-4 p.m. and 6-10 p.m.
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Mayo Civic Center, 30 Civic Center Drive South East, Rochester, MN 55904, Thursday, November 16, 2000, 1-4 p.m. and 6-10 p.m.

SEA will also conduct a meeting specifically for interested Tribes and Tribal organizations, as part of the formal government-to-government consultation process on the Draft EIS.

Pre-Registration for Public Meetings

Persons wanting to speak at a public meeting are strongly urged to pre-register by calling the toll-free Environmental Hotline for this project at 1-877-404-3044 and leave their name, telephone number, the name of any group, business, or agency affiliation, if applicable, and the date and time of the meeting at which they wish to speak. The deadline for pre-registration for all meetings is October 20, 2000.

Persons will be called to speak at each meeting in the order in which they pre-registered. Those wishing to speak but that did not pre-register will be accommodated at each meeting as time allows. Those wishing to speak at more than one meeting will also be accommodated as time allows and after all others have had an opportunity to participate. As SEA would like as many persons as possible to participate and given that there will be a limited amount of time at each meeting, all speakers are strongly encouraged to prepare summary oral comments, and submit detailed comments in writing. SEA also encourages groups of individuals with similar comments to designate a representative to speak for them.

By the Board, Elaine K. Kaiser, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 00-24852 Filed 9-26-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

[Federal Register: September 27, 2000 (Volume 65, Number 188)]
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 [Page 58146-58148]
 From the Federal Register Online via GPO Access [wais.access.gpo.gov]
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 DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Finance Docket No. 33407]

Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation Construction
 Into the Powder River Basin

AGENCY: Surface Transportation Board.

ACTION: Notice of availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement
 and notice of public meetings.

 SUMMARY: The Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation (DM&E) has filed an application with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) for authority to construct and operate new rail line facilities in east-central Wyoming, southwest South Dakota, and south-central Minnesota. The project, known as the Powder River Basin Expansion Project, involves approximately 280.9 miles of new rail line construction and would extend DM&E's existing rail line from Wall, South Dakota west to coal mines in Wyoming's Powder River Basin. Additionally, DM&E proposes to rebuild approximately 597.8 miles of existing rail line along its current system to standards acceptable for operation of unit coal trains. The project would require actions by a number of Federal agencies, including the Board, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS), the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation

[[Page 58147]]

(Reclamation), and the U.S. Coast Guard (Coast Guard).

The Board, through its Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) and in cooperation with USFS, BLM, COE, Reclamation, and the Coast Guard, has published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the Powder River Basin Expansion Project. This Draft EIS is a preliminary analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the DM&E proposal and its reasonable and feasible alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative. SEA emphasizes that the conclusions and recommended environmental mitigation measures in this Draft EIS are preliminary, and invites public and agency comments on all aspects of the Draft EIS. SEA is providing a 90-day public comment period on the Draft EIS. Comments must be postmarked by the close of the comment period, which is January 5, 2001. Information on how to submit comments is set forth below.

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decision regarding this project and any environmental conditions it might impose. When considering whether to grant final approval of the proposed transaction, the Board will consider the potential environmental effects and the cost of any environmental mitigation it might impose on the project. In reaching its final decision in this proceeding, the Board will take into account the full environmental record, including the Draft EIS, the Final EIS, and all public and agency comments received. The cooperating agencies will issue their decisions based on the same environmental record.

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SEA anticipates that DM&E will submit two permit applications under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to the COE by the publication date of this Notice. Comments on DM&E's Section 404 Permit Application relating to Minnesota should be sent to: Mr. Timothy Fell, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, 190 5th Street East, St. Paul, MN 55101-1638. Comments on DM&E's Section 404 Permit Application relating to Wyoming and South Dakota should be sent to: Mr. Jerry Folkers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, 215 North 17th Street, Omaha, NE 68102-4978. The COE has made the Applications available for review at various locations. For the location nearest you that has the Section 404 Application relating to Minnesota, please contact Mr. Fell at (651) 290-5360. For the location nearest you that has the Section 404 Application relating to South Dakota and Wyoming, please contact Mr. Folkers at (402) 221-4173.

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By the Board, Elaine K. Kaiser, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 00-24852 Filed 9-26-00; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

**Surface Transportation Board
Section of Environmental Analysis
Release of Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Notice of Public Meetings and
Public Comment Period
Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad's (DM&E) Proposed
Powder River Basin Expansion Project**

The Surface Transportation Board's (Board) Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA), in cooperation with U.S.D.A. Forest Service, U.S.D.I. Bureaus of Land Management and Reclamation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Coast Guard, has published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation's (DM&E) proposed Powder River Basin Expansion Project. The project involves approximately 280.9 miles of new rail line construction and associated facilities in south-central Minnesota, southwest South Dakota, and east-central Wyoming, and would extend DM&E's existing rail line from Wall, South Dakota west to coal mines in Wyoming's Powder River Basin. Additionally, DM&E proposes to rebuild approximately 600 miles of existing rail line along its current system to standards acceptable for operation of unit coal trains.

SEA has announced details for the 90-day public comment period, which ends **January 5, 2001**, and the dates, times, and locations of 12 public meetings that will be held to receive comments on the Draft EIS.

The Draft EIS discusses the potential environmental impacts that could result from the proposed Powder River Basin Expansion Project and includes SEA's preliminary recommendations for mitigating possible environmental effects. The Draft EIS reflects SEA's independent analysis and considers the views of Federal, state, and local agencies, Tribes, ranchers, farmers, communities, homeowners, organizations, businesses, and environmental groups.

SEA welcomes written comments on all aspects of the Draft EIS. SEA also invites comments on the Programmatic Agreement and Identification Plan, the Memorandum of Agreement, the Biological Assessment, and the Forest Plan Amendments, which are set forth in the Appendices to the Draft EIS.

Regarding the Forest Plan Amendments, the National Forest Management Act, 36 CFR 219.10(e), requires consistency between projects being proposed and National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans). Two existing Forest Plans (Nebraska and Medicine Bow Forest Plans) were evaluated for consistency with standards and guidelines of those plans as well as the Draft National Grasslands Plan Revision (Preferred Alternative 3). Based on the U.S. Forest Service identification of its Preferred Alternative, Alternative C, it has been determined that if Alternative C is selected for implementation, then Alternative C will not be consistent with any of the Forest Plans above and plan amendments must be proposed. You are invited to comment on these proposed Forest Plan Amendments (set forth in Appendix L of the Draft EIS) and may send written comments to Ms. Wendy Schmitzer, USFS Project Coordinator, Douglas Ranger District, 2250 East Richards Street, Douglas, Wyoming, 82633 or call (307) 358-1634. Email comments on the Forest Plan Amendments to: wschmitzer@fs.fed.us.

Because the Draft EIS is quite large -- over 2,000 pages and several volumes -- SEA has made the entire document available only to key governmental agencies and other appropriate entities, parties of record, and those who specifically requested all or part of it in response to a postcard mailing in June 2000. However, SEA has distributed the Draft EIS to over 80 public libraries. If you would like information about the library nearest you, please call SEA's toll-free Environmental Hotline at (877) 404-3044. The entire document also is available on the Board's website at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.

SEA will consider all public and agency comments in preparing the Final EIS and in making its final recommendations to the Board. The Board and the five cooperating agencies will then consider the entire environmental record, including all public and agency comments, the Draft EIS, and the Final EIS in making their final decisions on the proposed project.

Comments on the Draft EIS must be postmarked by **January 5, 2001**. For comment letters over 5 pages, please mail a signed original plus 10 copies. For comment letters 5 pages or less, a signed original is sufficient. All comments must be mailed to:

Office of the Secretary
Case Control Unit
STB Finance Docket No. 33407
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Please write the following in the lower left hand corner of the envelope:

Attention: Victoria Rutson
Environmental Project Manager
Environmental Filing.

Finally, SEA advises that comments on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) permitting requirements under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, specifically on DM&E's Section 404 Permit Applications, should be filed directly with the appropriate COE district office. Please send comments on the Section 404 Permit Application relating to Minnesota to Mr. Timothy Fell, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, 190 5th Street East, St. Paul, MN, 55101-1638. Please send comments on the Section 404 Permit Application relating to South Dakota and Wyoming to Mr. Jerry Folkers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, 215 North 17th Street, Omaha, NE, 68102-4978. The COE has made the Applications available for review at various locations. To find out the location nearest you that has the Section 404 Application relating to Minnesota please contact Mr. Fell at 651-290-5360. To find out the location nearest you that has the Section 404 Application relating to South Dakota and Wyoming please contact Mr. Folkers at 402-221-4173.

The public is also invited to attend public meetings at which SEA and the participating cooperating agencies will make a brief presentation, and written and verbal comments will be accepted. Please call the toll-free Environmental Hotline at (877) 404-3044 by **October 20, 2000** to pre-register for the meetings, and to indicate if you require special accommodations to participate in a meeting. The dates, times and locations of the public meetings are listed below.

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Douglas, WY 82633
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6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Newcastle, WY

The Fountain Inn
2 Fountain Plaza
Newcastle, WY 82701
Wednesday, November 1, 2000
1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and
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Rapid City, SD

Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
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Best Western Hotel and Restaurant

1111 Range Street

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1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and

6:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Rochester, MN

Mayo Civic Center

30 Civic Center Drive South East

Rochester, MN 55904

Thursday, November 16, 2000

1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and

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SEA will also conduct a meeting specifically for interested Tribes and Tribal organizations, as part of the formal government-to-government consultation process on the Draft EIS.

Additional information can be found on the Board's website at <http://www.stb.dot.gov>.



Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

NEWS

FOR RELEASE:
Wednesday, September 27, 2000
No. 00-38

Contact: Dennis Watson
(202) 565-1596
TDD/TDY 1 (800) 877-8339
www.stb.dot.gov

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
ISSUES DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR DAKOTA, MINNESOTA & EASTERN RAILROAD'S
PROPOSED POWDER RIVER BASIN EXPANSION PROJECT**

Surface Transportation Board (Board) Chairman Linda J. Morgan announced today that a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) has been issued for the Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation's (DM&E) Powder River Basin Expansion Project (PRB Expansion Project), in the case entitled *Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Railroad Corporation Construction in the Powder River Basin*, STB Finance Docket No. 33407. The Board welcomes public review and comment on the over 2000-page Draft EIS, with written comments due **January 5, 2001.**

The DM&E Project: DM&E filed an application with the Board for authority to construct and operate a new rail line and associated facilities in east-central Wyoming, southwest South Dakota, and south-central Minnesota. The line would enable a third railroad to serve Wyoming's Powder River Basin coal mines to transport coal eastward and is designed to increase the operational efficiency of DM&E's existing rail line in Minnesota and eastern South Dakota.

The PRB Expansion Project is the largest and most challenging construction proposal ever before the Board. It comprises nearly 1,000 miles of rail line (approximately 280 miles of

new rail construction and 600 miles of rail-line rehabilitation); traverses three states; involves the participation of five cooperating Federal agencies (the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, and Coast Guard); entails numerous and diverse environmental issues; and involves new rail yards and various alternatives, as well as bypass proposals, the majority of which have their own potentially significant environmental impacts.

The Draft EIS: The Draft EIS addresses various environmental impacts identified by the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) regarding this project, as well as alternatives SEA has considered. It also addresses measures SEA currently recommends that the Board impose on DM&E's proposal to mitigate or alleviate potentially significant environmental impacts.

In particular, the Draft EIS discusses several issues, alternatives and potential modifications related to DM&E's proposal, including:

- The No-Action Alternative, under which D&ME would not receive final Board approval, or authority from the appropriate cooperating agencies, to construct or operate a rail-line extension into the Powder River Basin.
- Three major alternative routes for extending DM&E's existing system westward to access mines in the Powder River Basin.
- A connector rail line that would link two sections of DM&E's existing main line at Mankato, MN, and a new connection with another railroad (I&M Rail Link) in Owatonna, MN.
- Construction and operation of four proposed bypasses (for the communities of Rochester and Owatonna, MN and Brookings and Pierre, SD), two of which (Rochester and Brookings) SEA determined to be reasonable and feasible.
- Construction and operation of six major new rail yards.

A one-page "Project at a Glance" and charts providing more information on the major alternatives SEA analyzed and on SEA's preliminary recommendations are attached to this news release. A complete overview of the project and SEA's analysis is set forth in the Executive Summary to the Draft EIS.

SEA and the five cooperating agencies will consider all public and agency comments on the Draft EIS in preparing a Final EIS. SEA will then make its final recommendations to the Board. The Board and the cooperating agencies will then consider the entire environmental record developed in this case--including all public and agency comments, the Draft EIS, and the Final EIS--in making their respective decisions on the proposed project.

Comments on the Draft EIS must be postmarked by **January 5, 2001**. For comment

letters over five pages in length, commenters must submit a signed original plus 10 copies. A signed original is sufficient for comment letters of five pages or fewer. All comments must be mailed to:

**Office of the Secretary
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with the following designation written in the lower left-hand corner of the envelope:

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Public Meetings: In addition to receiving written comments on the Draft EIS, SEA will host 12 public meetings at the following locations, dates, and times:

Douglas, WY
Best Western Douglas Inn
1450 Riverbend Drive
Douglas, WY 82633
Monday, October 30, 2000
6:00-10:00 p.m.

Newcastle, WY
The Fountain Inn
2 Fountain Plaza
Newcastle, WY 82701
Wednesday, November 1, 2000
1:00-4:00 p.m. and
6:00-10:00 p.m.

Rapid City, SD
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
444 Mount Rushmore Road North
Rapid City, SD 57701
Thursday, November 2, 2000
6:00-10:00 p.m.

Pierre, SD

Best Western Kings Inn
200 South Pierre
Pierre, SD 57501
Monday, November 13, 2000
1:00-4:00 p.m. and
6:00-10:00 p.m.

Brookings, SD

Brookings Inn
2500 East 5th Street
Brookings, SD 57006
Tuesday, November 14, 2000
1:00-4:00 p.m. and
6:00-10:00 p.m.

Mankato, MN

Best Western Hotel and Restaurant
1111 Range Street
North Mankato, MN 56003
Wednesday, November 15, 2000
1:00-4:00 p.m. and
6:00-10:00 p.m.

Rochester, MN

Mayo Civic Center
30 Civic Center Drive South East
Rochester, MN 55904
Thursday, November 16, 2000
1:00-4:00 p.m. and
6:00-10:00 p.m.

SEA also will conduct a meeting specifically for interested Tribes and Tribal organizations as part of the formal government-to-government consultation process on the Draft EIS.

Pre-Registration for Public Meetings: Persons wanting to speak at a public meeting are urged to pre-register by telephoning the toll-free Environmental Hotline at 1-877-404-3044 and providing their names, telephone numbers, the name of their group, business, or agency affiliation, if any, and the date and time of the meeting during which they wish to speak. The deadline for pre-registration for all meetings is **October 20, 2000**.

Availability of Draft EIS: Because the Draft EIS is quite large--over 2,000 pages within several bound, paperback volumes--SEA has made the entire document available to key governmental agencies and other appropriate entities, parties of record (official participants in the case), and those who specifically requested the entire document in response to SEA's postcard-

notification mailing this past June. SEA also has distributed the entire Draft EIS to over 80 public libraries and has asked that the Draft EIS be made available in their reference sections. To obtain the name of the library nearest you that has received the Draft EIS, telephone the Environmental Hotline at 1-877-404-3044, and leave your name, address and telephone number. You will be contacted promptly.

The entire Draft EIS in Finance Docket No. 33047 is available for viewing and downloading via the Board's website at www.stb.dot.gov. Copies of the printed Draft EIS are available for a fee by contacting **Dā-To-Dā Office Solutions, Room 405, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006, telephone (202) 466-5530.**

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ATTACHMENTS

Powder River Basin Expansion Project at a Glance

Key Dates:

Application: February 20, 1998
 Notice of Intent: March 20, 1998
 Draft EIS Scope: June 10, 1998
 Public Scoping Meetings: April-July 1998
 Final Scope: March 10, 1999
 Newsletter Mailing: December 27, 1999
 Postcard Mailing: June 5, 2000
 Draft EIS Service Date: September 27, 2000
 Comment Due Date: January 5, 2001

Proposed Project Components from DM&E's Application:

New Construction (approx. 280 miles)

Wasta, South Dakota/Powder River Basin

Mines in Wyoming (approx. 260 miles)

Minnesota:

Mankato Construction Proposal - 13.3 miles

Owatonna Construction Proposal - 2.9 miles

Reconstruction of Existing Rail Line: (approx. 600 miles)

Minnesota - approx. 220 miles

South Dakota - approx. 320 miles

Agencies:

Lead:

Surface Transportation Board

Cooperating Agencies:

Forest Service

Bureau of Land Management

Army Corps of Engineers

Bureau of Reclamation

Coast Guard

Extension Alternatives:

Alternative A - No Action

Alternative B - New Construction along Cheyenne River

(originally proposed in Application) - 144.9 miles (SD)/149.9 miles (WY)

Alternative C - New Construction modified to avoid sensitive environmental areas in SD and WY - 142.6 miles(SD)/138.2 miles(WY)

Alternative D - Reconstruction of Existing Rail Line through

Rapid City to Smithwick;

New Construction to Edgemont, then new

construction adjacent to existing rail bed;

through Newcastle and Moorcroft. - 53.2 miles(SD)/180 miles(WY)

Wyoming Issues:

Thunder Basin National
Grassland, Ranchers

New rail line construction to
connect with Powder River Basin
coal mines

1 rail yard

Mine Loop Alternatives to
Black Thunder Mine and
North Antelope Mine

South Dakota Issues:

Eastern SD: Missouri River Bridge,
communities, farmers

Western SD: Buffalo Gap National Grassland, tribal concerns,
ranchers, sensitive riparian areas, Angostura Reservoir

Reconstruction of DM&E's Existing line from MN to Wall

New rail line construction to Wyoming Border

2 new rail yards

Proposed Brookings Bypass, Spring Creek,
and Hay Canyon Alternatives

Minnesota Issues:

Communities, farmers, Mayo Clinic,
sensitive riparian areas, wetlands

Reconstruction of existing rail line
from Winona to South Dakota border

3 new rail yards

Proposed Rochester Bypass

Mankato and Owatonna Proposed

Construction and Alternatives

Summary Highlights of Environmental Impacts

South Dakota and Wyoming New Construction				
Alternative	Description	Purpose	Resources Impacted	SEA's Preliminary Recommendation
Alternative B	Proposed route, extends southwest from Wall, South Dakota along the Cheyenne River and westward into Wyoming to access the coal mines	Extend DM&E's existing system westward to access the coal mines in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming	Unique Geological Formations, Soils, Paleontological Resources, Agriculture, Land Use (Residential, Federal Lands), Minerals and Mining, Surface Water, Wetlands, Groundwater, Air Quality, Noise, Vibration, Vegetation, Wildlife, Threatened and Endangered Species, Transportation, Safety, Energy Resources, Cultural Resources, Socioeconomics, Recreation, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	Should the Board grant final approval of the project, Alternative C appears to be the least environmentally intrusive alternative.
Alternative C	Modified proposed route similar to Alternative B but with the alignment modification to avoid the environmentally sensitive areas along the Cheyenne River	Extend DM&E's existing system westward to access coal mines in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming and avoid environmentally sensitive areas along the Cheyenne River	Unique Geological Formations, Geological Hazards, Soils, Paleontological Resources, Agriculture, Land Use (Residential, Federal Lands), Minerals and Mining, Surface Water, Wetlands, Groundwater, Air Quality, Noise, Vibration, Vegetation, Wildlife, Threatened and Endangered Species, Transportation, Safety, Energy Resources, Cultural Resources, Socioeconomics, Recreation, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	
Alternative D	Existing corridor alternative that utilizes existing rail line from Wall to Rapid City to Smithwick, new alignment west to Edgemont and then parallel existing rail line to access the mines	Extend DM&E's existing system westward to access coal mines in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming while utilizing existing rail lines to the extent practicable	Geological Hazards, Soils, Paleontological Resources, Agriculture, Land Use (Residential, Business and Industrial, Federal Lands), Minerals and Mining, Surface Water, Wetlands, Groundwater, Air Quality, Noise, Vibration, Vegetation, Wildlife, Threatened and Endangered Species, Transportation, Safety, Energy Resources, Cultural Resources, Socioeconomics, Recreation, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	

Spring Creek Alternatives - South Dakota				
Alternative	Description	Purpose	Resources Impacted	SEA's Preliminary Recommendation
Spring Creek Segment	Segment of Alternative B, crosses and follows Spring Creek floodplain	Provide efficient grade for new rail line extending DM&E's existing system.	Geological Hazards, Soils, Paleontological Resources, Land Use, (Agriculture, Federal Lands), Surface Water, Wetlands, Air Quality, Vegetation, Wildlife, Cultural Resources, Recreation, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	While both alternatives would have potentially significant impacts to environmental resources, the Phiney Flat Alternative would have far fewer impacts that would be more capable of being mitigated; therefore SEA preliminarily concludes that the Phiney Flat Alternative would be environmentally preferable.
Phiney Flat Alternative	Segment of Alternative B moved out of Spring Creek drainage area	Avoid sensitive environmental areas (wetlands, riparian areas) along Spring Creek	Geological Hazards, Soils, Paleontological Resources, Land Use (Agriculture), Surface Water, Air Quality, Vegetation, Wildlife, Cultural Resources, Recreation, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	

Hay Canyon Alternatives - South Dakota				
Alternative	Description	Purpose	Resources Impacted	SEA's Preliminary Recommendation
Hay Canyon Segment	Alignment following Hay Canyon drainage from north of the Cheyenne River south to Smithwick	Provide suitable alignment while avoiding environmentally sensitive areas along the Cheyenne River	Geological Hazards, Soils, Paleontological Resources, Land Use (Agricultural, Federal Lands), Surface Water, Wetlands, Air Quality, Vegetation, Wildlife, Cultural Resources, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	Each of the alternatives would have significant environmental impacts, but to different resources. SEA requests additional comments from agencies and the public to assist in identifying an environmentally preferable alternative.
Oral Segment	Alignment following the Cheyenne River to Oral, then using existing rail line south to Smithwick	Provide suitable alignment while using as much of the existing DM&E rail line as practicable, avoid irrigated lands and environmentally sensitive areas along Hay Canyon	Geological Hazards, Soils, Paleontological Resources, Land Use (Agriculture, Federal Lands), Surface Water, Wetlands, Air Quality, Noise, Vibration, Vegetation, Wildlife, Cultural Resources, Recreation, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	
WG Divide Alternative	Alignment following WG Divide drainage from north of the Cheyenne River south to Smithwick	Provide suitable alignment while avoiding environmentally sensitive areas along the Cheyenne River and Hay Canyon	Geological Hazards, Soils, Paleontological Resources, Land Use (Agriculture, Federal Lands), Air Quality, Cultural Resources, Recreation, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	

Mankato Alternatives - Minnesota				
Alternative	Description	Purpose	Resources Impacted	SEA's Preliminary Recommendation
M-1	No Build Alternative	Maintain current condition which involves operational inefficiencies due to DM&E operating over another rail carrier (UP)	Noise, Safety	Absent an agreement with UP, Alternative M-2 appears to be environmentally preferable. Should DM&E reach agreement with UP, and implement measures to ensure the integrity of the flood control projects, Alternative M-3 could become environmentally preferred alternative.
M-2	Southern Mankato Route, provide a connection route south of Mankato.	Bypass DM&E's trackage rights on UP rail line, while avoiding existing rail corridor	Soil, Land Use (Agriculture, Residential), Surface Water, Wetlands, Air Quality, Noise, Vibration, Vegetation, Wildlife, Aquatic Resources and Fisheries, Transportation, Safety, Cultural Resources, Socioeconomics, Recreation, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	
M-3	Existing Corridor Route, provide a connection route within UP's existing rail corridor.	Bypass DM&E's trackage rights on UP rail line by confining rail construction to existing corridor	Land Use (Agriculture, Residential, Business and Industrial), Public Facilities, Public Parks, Surface Water, Wetlands, Flood control projects, Air Quality, Noise, Vibration, Aquatic Resources and Fisheries, Transportation, Safety, Socioeconomics, Recreation	

Owatonna Alternatives - Minnesota				
Alternative	Description	Purpose	Resources Impacted	SEA's Preliminary Recommendation
O-1	No action alternative, DM&E would be unable to interchange rail traffic with I&M, existing rail line would not be reconstructed	Maintain environmental status quo, DM&E rail interchange would be limited to existing locations	Noise, Vibration, Transportation, Safety	Assuming DM&E could implement Alternative O-5, SEA preliminarily concludes that Alternative O-5 appears to be the environmentally preferable alternative because it would not require any additional right-of-way and would have generally minimal environmental impacts. If Alternative O-5 could not be implemented, SEA believes Alternative O-4 would be the environmentally preferable alternative because it would have less environmental impacts and minimize new rail line construction.
O-2	Reconstruction of existing rail line, but no interchange with I&M	Improve rail operations through Owatonna, DM&E rail interchange would be limited to existing locations	Land Use (Residential, Business and Industrial), Wetlands, Air Quality, Noise, Vibration, Transportation, Safety, Cultural Resources, Socioeconomics, Recreation, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	
O-3	Reconstruction of existing rail line and construction of 3.2-mile rail line connection with I&M	Enable rail interchange between DM&E and I&M using connecting track long enough to accommodate an entire train	Soils, Land Use (Agriculture, Residential, Business and Industrial), Wetlands, Air Quality, Noise, Vibration, Vegetation, Wildlife, Transportation, Safety, Cultural Resources, Socioeconomics, Recreation, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	
O-4	Reconstruction of existing rail line and construction of 1.7-mile rail line connection with I&M	Enable rail interchange between DM&E and I&M, minimizing new rail line construction	Soils, Land Use (Agriculture, Residential, Business and Industrial), Wetlands, Air Quality, Noise, Vibration, Vegetation, Wildlife, Transportation, Safety, Cultural Resources, Socioeconomics, Recreation, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	
O-5	Reconstruction of existing rail line and construction of rail connection with I&M within existing rail line right-of-way of another rail carrier (UP)	Enable rail interchange between DM&E and I&M minimizing new rail line construction and confining construction to existing rail right-of-way	Land Use (Residential, Business and Industrial), Wetlands, Air Quality, Noise, Vibration, Transportation, Safety, Cultural Resources, Socioeconomics, Recreation, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	

Rochester Alternatives - Minnesota				
Alternative	Description	Purpose	Resources Impacted	SEA's Preliminary Recommendation
R-1	No action alternative, existing rail line not reconstructed	To maintain the environmental status quo, rail operations in Rochester remain unchanged	Safety, Transportation, Socioeconomics	Both reconstruction of DM&E's existing line through Rochester and a bypass route south of the City would have significant, although different, environmental impacts. Therefore, SEA requests further comments on which alternative would be environmentally preferable and the extent to which the community should contribute to the cost of a bypass, if one is approved.
R-2	Reconstruction of existing rail line through Rochester	Improve rail service and operation through Rochester	Land Use (Residential, Business and Industrial), Public Facilities (Mayo Clinic), Surface Water, Wetlands, Air Quality, Noise, Vibration, Transportation (emergency vehicles), Safety, Cultural Resources, Socioeconomics	
R-3	Construction of new rail line by-pass around the South side of Rochester, no change in rail line or operations in Rochester	Minimize environmental impacts from increased rail traffic by routing it around Rochester	Geologic Hazards, Soils, Land Use (Agriculture, Residential), Surface Water, Wetlands, Groundwater, Air Quality, Noise, Vibration, Vegetation, Wildlife, Transportation, Safety, Cultural Resources, Socioeconomics, Recreation, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	
R-4	Construction of a new rail line by-pass for all rail traffic around the south side of Rochester	Minimize environmental impacts by rerouting new and existing rail traffic around Rochester	Geologic Hazards, Soils, Land Use (Agriculture, Residential), Surface Water, Wetlands, Groundwater, Air Quality, Noise, Vibration, Vegetation, Wildlife, Transportation, Safety, Cultural Resources, Socioeconomics, Recreation, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	

Brookings Alternatives - South Dakota				
Alternative	Description	Purpose	Resources Impacted	SEA's Preliminary Recommendation
B-1	No-Action Alternative, existing rail line not reconstructed	To maintain the environmental status quo, rail operations in Brookings would remain unchanged	Transportation, safety	Based on the differences in the potential environmental impacts, SEA preliminarily concludes that Alternative B-4 appears to be the environmentally preferred alternative. However, because this alternative may not contribute to the overall purpose and need defined for the project (since it would not improve rail service to Brookings shippers), SEA specifically requests further comments on the Brookings alternatives, including the extent to which the community should contribute to the cost of a bypass, if one is approved.
B-2	Reconstruction of existing rail line through Brookings	Improve rail service and operation through Brookings	Land Use (Residential, Business and Industrial), Wetlands, Air Quality, Noise, Vibration, Wildlife, Transportation, Safety, Socioeconomics, Recreation,	
B-3	Construction of new rail line bypass around the north side of Brookings, no change in rail line or operations in Brookings	Minimize environmental impacts from increased rail traffic by routing it around Brookings	Soils, Land Use (Agriculture), Surface Water, Wetlands, Air Quality, Vegetation, Wildlife, Transportation, Safety, Cultural Resources, Socioeconomics, Recreation, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	
B-4	Construction of a new rail line bypass for all rail traffic around the north side of Brookings	Minimize environmental impacts by rerouting new and existing rail traffic around Brookings	Soils,, Land Use (Agriculture), Surface Water, Wetlands, Air Quality, Vegetation, Wildlife, Transportation, Safety, Cultural Resources, Socioeconomics, Recreation, Viewsheds/Scenic Values	

Middle East Staging and Marshaling Yard - Minnesota

Alternative	Description	Purpose	Resources Impacted	SEA's Preliminary Recommendation
Option A	Construction and operation of new rail yard west of Mankato, Minnesota	Provide facilities for train crew changes and efficient interchange of rail traffic with UP	Soils, Land Use (agricultural), State lands, surface water, wetlands, air quality, noise, vegetation, transportation, socioeconomics	SEA determined impacts to Minneopa State Park to be significant and difficult to mitigate. Therefore, SEA preliminarily concludes that Option B (which would avoid potential impacts to Minneopa State Park) would be the environmentally preferable alternative.
Option B	Construction and operation of new rail yard east of New Ulm, Minnesota	Provide facilities for train crew changes and efficient interchange of rail traffic with UP, while avoiding State Park lands	Soils, Land Use (agricultural), wetlands, air quality, noise, vegetation, transportation, socioeconomics	

West Staging and Marshaling Yards - Wyoming

Alternative	Description	Purpose	Resources Impacted	SEA's Preliminary Recommendation
Option A	Construction and operation of a new rail yard on the Campbell/Weston County line, Wyoming	Provide facilities for train staging and dispatch westward to the coal mines and eastward to coal users	Soils, Land Use (grazing/ranching), National Grasslands, State lands, surface water, air quality, vegetation, wildlife, socioeconomics, cultural resources	Based on the information available to date, SEA considers Option B to be environmentally preferable because it has less impact on public lands, particularly Thunder Basin National Grassland. In the event DM&E were to exchange land elsewhere for National Grasslands at the Option A site and the USFS were to agree to Option A, SEA would reconsider whether Option A would be preferable.
Option B	Construction and operation of a new rail yard slightly south of Option A	Provide facilities for train staging and dispatch westward to the coal mines and eastward to coal users, avoiding impacts to National Grasslands	Soils, Land Use (grazing/ranching), State lands, surface water, air quality, vegetation, wildlife, socioeconomics, cultural resources	